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THE C.I.A.'S EGGHEADS.

The development of the foreign intelligence operations of the United States can be seen in public and governmental attitudes toward the Central Intelligence agency. In a decade, or less, the picture of the C.I.A. has changed from that of a curious assembly of curious talents involved in work quite alien to American traditions, to that of a high-level government operation, cloaked in secrecy, conducting tactical and strategic international power plays with both military and political overtones.

Joseph Alsop, writing today on page 6 of the appointment of John A. McCone to succeed Allen W. Dulles as director of Central Intelligence, refers to a tug-of-war between the "hard-boiled" and "soft-boiled" attitudes toward both the agency's role and the cold war itself. The inference is that C.I.A. represents hard-boiled realism pressing for a determined waging of the cold war, but that figures typified by Adlai E. Stevenson and Chester Bowles are of the "soft-boiled" cold war school. The latter tend to oppose the overt waging of cold war as such, according to the Alsop report. Or rather they oppose the key role which the agency has come to play in the struggle, feeling it has damaged hopes for easing the cold war tensions and for advancing U.S. prestige with the uncommitted and newly independent nations.

The critics of the C.I.A. felt the Cuban debacle was the opportunity to downgrade the influence of the C.I.A., it is reported, and they pressed for at least a neutral representative, as between hard-boiled and soft-boiled, to succeed Dulles. But President Kennedy did not finally accept their arguments and named Mr. McCone, representative of the hard-boiled school of thought about the C.I.A. and the cold war.

In all this the inference is that the soft-boiled approach is mostly represented by the egg-head group, the ideal men who tend to come from the academic world with stress on intellectual interests. Both its supporters and the C.I.A. are seen as quite the opposite, as trigger-happy men of action negligent of international repercussions and ignorant of the force of ideas and ideals in world politics.

Well, it so happens that the egg-head is represented in the C.I.A. in vast numbers on its staff. In the beginning, back in the World War II days of the Office of Strategic Services and then when the C.I.A. was being set up in the late 1940's, the large research and intelligence-digesting staffs of the agency were naturally drawn in good measure from those with academic backgrounds and with intellectual equipment and interests that could permit the kind of mental labors which C.I.A. work demanded. Today many of the veteran C.I.A. career personnel, recently recruited and of long service, could definitely be classified as having come from the egg-head world, if anyone wants to so classify people.

There is, in fact, an outstanding egg-head right up in the top echelon of the C.I.A. Richard M. Bissell, Jr., the man who planned and tried to engineer the Cuban operation even as the soft-boiled school of thought was pulling the props from under it, is by training a professional economist. He was educated at Yale and the London School of Economics, holds a Ph.D., has been a professor at Yale and M.I.T., has served as a government economist in many capacities and also a consulting economist, and has written for many economic publications. This is certainly not to suggest that the academic world is by nature soft in the head about international politics and that Mr. Bissell and others with like backgrounds in the C.I.A. are exceptional. Rather it suggests that quite the opposite attitude may be found among this group, and that applies both among and outside its representatives in the C.I.A.